

CHAPTER 10

SECTION 9 FIREARMS SAFETY

10.9.1. PURPOSE

This section establishes guidelines for the safe use of firearms in the conduct of official duties. It also includes a provision for the addition of locking devices to prevent accidents.

10.9.2. AUTHORITIES

- A. President Clinton's Directive, Child Safety Locks For Handguns, dated March 5, 1997.
- B. Title 7 United States Code, section 2274.

10.9.3. POLICY

It is APHIS policy that only program activities with authorization by the Secretary of Agriculture will be permitted to transport, carry, and use firearms to perform official duties.

All firearms used in the performance of official duties will be furnished with a locking device.

Each program activity with authorization to use firearms will supplement this section with standard operating procedures, and guidelines for safe and appropriate use.

Use and possession of firearms by employees will be in accordance with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. APHIS employees are charged with the responsibility of becoming familiar with the laws of the states and localities where they must work and travel.

10.9.4 GENERAL

Firearms will be transported in a safe manner, and as prescribed by local statute, and/or appropriate program directive. In general, Agency provided and privately owned firearms used for Agency purposes will be transported in an unloaded condition, and in a discrete manner which will not attract undue attention nor be in violation of concealed weapon laws. If a firearm must be stored in an APHIS motor vehicle, the firearm will be secured by placing it out of sight as permitted by statute, and the vehicle properly locked.

Agency firearms issued to employees will be provided with a locking device designed to either completely surround and block the trigger, or a device designed to prevent operation and loading of the firearm. Provision for these locking devices is directed in accordance with the March 5, 1997, Directive of the President.

All Agency and personal firearms used for Agency programs, whether stored in the employee's home, or Federal facility and ***NOT*** stored in a securely locked firearm storage cabinet, must be in an unloaded condition, and the locking device properly installed. Firearm safety locks, and written instructions will be provided to employees when using Agency firearms.

Privately owned firearms are the responsibility of the owner. Agency employees using personal firearms on official duty must be provided locking devices, and will ensure safe storage of their firearms. The lock manufacturer's written instructions must be provided and followed.

10.9.5 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Agency employees who use firearms for official duties will be formally trained in the safe handling and use of firearms. This formal training must be provided for by the Agency prior to use of any firearm and retraining held at a minimum of every three years. APHIS employees will adhere to program directives for appropriate training and record keeping. The Agency will recognize documented, formal training provided to employees as members of the Armed Forces, its Reserves, and the National Guard. Orientation to the specific firearm being used by the employee will be provided and documented by knowledgeable program personnel, or recognized professionals.

10.9.6 EDUCATION AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

Inquiries regarding firearms training information, locks and materials will be directed to the appropriate regional office. Questions concerning this section should be addressed to the Safety, Health, and Environmental Staff.

Employees are encouraged to further help prevent the possibility of a firearm accidents occurring with Agency owned or privately owned firearms, by ensuring that family members are educated and trained in firearms safety and responsibility.

There are numerous organizations which can provide safety materials and training programs. Local resources are available, such as local 4-H chapters, wildlife agencies, and sportsmen's groups, many of which will use program materials from the following national sources. These sources can provide safety materials upon request.

National Shooting Sports Foundation
11 Mile Hill Road
Newton, CT 06470-2359
(203) 426-1320
www.nssf.org

National Rifle Association of America
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, VA 22080-7400
(703) 267-1000
www.nra.org

National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
(800) 621-6244
www.nsc.org

The Izaak Walton League of America
707 Conservation Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
(301) 548-0150